

No 4

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AN
EPISTLE
TO
FRIENDS
Concerning the Present and Succeeding
TIMES.

Being a Faithful Exhortation and Warning
to all Friends, who profess the Truth, to beware
of the manifold Wiles of the Enemy, and to stand
armed in the Light of the Lord God of Heaven and
Earth, (against his Assaults) that so they may be
ready to answer the Call and requirings of the
Lord.

Also something signified of the Misery of the Succeed-
ing Times, that all may be prepared, and that the
Evil Day may not overtake any unawares, but such
as turn away their Ear from Counsel.

*By one who is a Traveller in the way of Peace, and hath
good Will towards all Men, and more especially to the
Household of Faith,* STEPHEN CRISP.

*Let him that hath an Ear, hear what the Spirit saith to
the Churches.*

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*An Epistle to Friends concerning the
Present and Succeeding Times.*

Dear Friends,

YOU whom the Lord hath reached unto in this the day of His Love, and hath made known the way of Truth and Righteousness unto you, through the raising up of that holy living Witness of himself, that long lay hid and buried in you, and hath brought you to a secret feeling of something in you, that is worth the minding and regarding; and the Lord causing this to appear in the day of your seeking, as a Light, discovering Darkness, and its Power, by which ye were formerly holden, and given you by his Spirit a sense and secret Hope, that in this Light, the way of Deliverance was to be attained unto; this Hope made you not ashamed of the Light which before you hated, but you came to know and embrace it, even while others still hated it, and you for its sake; yet your Hearts being affected with the hope that did appear therein, could not but joyn unto it, as to make publick Profession of

it for its' own sake ; and for no other ends or designs, or interest at all, but with resolution in that Light, to wait for the Salvation of God. Dear Friends, it is you aforementioned that both now, and for some Days and Weeks my Heart hath been deeply exercised concerning, even Night and Day ; and the aboundings of the Fathers Love doth often overcome me, and draws me forth now to say and write these things unto you for your Admonition and Establishment ; and indeed it is you who did thus rightly own the way of Truth, and knew your believing to be the Gift and Mercy of God to your Souls, that I do aim at ; for those that have taken up the profession of the precious Truth upon by-respects and sinister ends, and but for Reasons propounded in their Carnal minds ; tho I do pity them, yet I have not much at this time to say to them but this, *The Day shall declare them, and their Garments shall not hide them.*

But you, Oh my Friends, who had fellowship with us, in the deep travels of our beginnings, and did come to Truth the same way, and have known the power and vertue of it, many times overcoming you in your inward Man, which hath made you cry out, *Lord, evermore give us of this Bread ;* and hath made you as a watred Garden : Oh Friends ! how shall I express or signifie unto you those
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Longings, those ardent Desires and earnest Breathings of my Soul, that you, even you, might abide to the end of all Trials and Tribulations, Adversities, and might inherit that Crown of Immortality that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and might not by any means be bereft thereof; this is singly my travel in Body and Spirit, that you might be kept and preserved out of all the subtil Snares of the wicked One, which hunts for the Soul, even of those that have believed; and therefore in dear and tender love, I have a few things to write unto you for the clearing of my Conscience, and discharging my duty in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord give you all a tender and an understanding Heart, that both you and I may yet have cause daily to praise the Lord in the glorious Light of his Salvation, which he hath manifested among us by the revealing his Son Jesus Christ, to whom belongs *Dominion, Honour and Glory forever, Amen.*

And first, dear Friends, it is in my Heart to put you in remembrance of that by which we were called and convinced, which as a Foundation Principle was laid in and among you, and it being unchangable and unalterable in it self, doth therefore admit of no alteration or change in those that are rightly kept to it.

It was a Light which arose in our Hearts, and shined forth from God, the Father of Lights, carrying in its appearance the Nature and Property of God, both in its condemning Evil, which the Enemy had sown or planted in us; and owning, allowing, and justifying every thing that was good and honest, just and equal; even those Thoughts in our Hearts which were of turning towards the Lord, and seeking his Righteousness; these thoughts were justified and encouraged by the Light, and all the contrary discovered and judged, as they were brought to it to be tryed. Now this Light did our Souls rejoyce in, as they had good cause, tho it took away our former Rejoycings; our Pleasures in Vanities and Iniquity died, our Glory in this World withered, our Friendship with the Sons of men decayed, and we stood in the Light and saw all these things, and were not sorry at it, but waited daily to see these things more and more brought to pass; neither was there a permitting our Thoughts to go out, how we might prevent those Damages, or repair these Losses, but the Cross of Christ was indeed our glorying or rejoycing; and the Hope that was before us, did make us despise the Pleasures, Treasures and Honours, Friendship and Delights of this World; and in those daies you grew into a feeling of the heavenly Joy,

Joy, where the hundred-fold was witnessed in your Bosoms, and the Zeal of the Lord was kindled by his own Spirit in you, against whatsoever this Light of Jesus in the Conscience did witness against; and the Lord beheld your Integrity, and blessed you, and multiplied you, and added to your strength and stature, and then did the Fruits of this glorious Work abound among you, in three more general and special effects; by which effects, or by their continuance among you, let all now come to search and try themselves, that so, dear Friends, those that have continued faithful in them all, may persevere in like manner to the end: and those, who upon true search do find, that they have failed, and fallen short in all or any of them, may make haste to Repent, and to turn to that which was the Root of them all, that they may not be found as fruitless and withered Branches, in the day that cometh, lest they be cut off, and utterly consumed, and blotted out from among the living Branches of the Vine; for a day cometh that Truth will look into the Fig-tree for Fruit, and Leaves will not defend it from the Curse and Blasting.

The three especial *Fruits* that did spring forth from this blessed Root, and were and are to continue and increase in us and among us to the end, are these:

1. *Purity*, manifested in a Godly Conversation.

2. *Unity*, manifested in dear and tender Love one towards another.

3. *Faithfulness*, manifested in bearing a constant and faithful Testimony to the thing we had received and believed, tho it were unto great loss and sufferings.

And against all these doth the wicked one appear, to see if he can make you barren concerning them, and that with divers Wiles and Subtilties, that he may prevail on you, and not be known to be the Enemy, but might so overcome you, as that you might both submit to him, and then plead for him and his Snares and Wiles, as being just, right, lawful, prudent, convenient, &c. But, Oh dear Friends, let all be watchful and diligent to wait in the sense and true feeling of that Seed that never fell nor was beguiled; and you will (even the least of you) see and comprehend his workings and transformings, and be delivered from them.

1. *Purity and Holiness* was a Fruit in you, which doth yet flourish in many (*blessed be the Lord*) who are as watchful and careful to approve themselves in obedience to the Light of Truth in their inward parts, as ever, and find as great a necessity both of trying and judging with its Judgment as ever; these having

ving thus waited, have renewed their strength unto this very day, and do mount up as upon the Wings of an Eagle ; these are neither weary in *running*, nor faint they in their walking ; But alas ! Friends, even these do know with how great and manifold assaults they have been assaulted, and known and see with sorrow of heart how the assault hath prevailed upon some, by working into the mind a secret Liberty, and supposed Enlargedness, whereby a Carelesness hath entred some, and they having no Keeper, but the measure of Light revealed in their Hearts and Consciences, so soon as they came to be perswaded to slight the Reproofs of that, they soon erred ; and this supposed Liberty entred, *That now, after so many years strictness and circumspection, they should not need now to stand so straitly to try things and words as at first, because now a day of more Liberty was come ;* and this Liberty secretly prevailed against that pure fear that once was placed in their hearts, and against the very obedience of Truth, inwardly in the subjection of the mind, and then it became manifest outwardly ; the Actions sometimes blame-worthy, the Words and Speech again corrupted, and run into the old Channel of the World, like them again, and the single pure Language, learned in the Light, in the time of their poverty and simplicity,

plicity, almost lost and forgotten, and so the work of God which he wrought, in a manner laid waste; and then, when this Liberty is entred, and made use of, as aforesaid, oftentimes a secret subtilty ariseth against the judgment of Truth, either from within, or from any outwardly, that are grieved with this loose and careless kind of speaking or acting, which subtilty leads to contend for it, against the Judgment, telling the Creature, *Why these things are but small things, and little things, and what, we must not strain at a Gnat, and such like.* Oh my Friends! beware of these evil suggestions of the wicked one: How came they to be small and little things, seeing they were great things with us in the beginning? And how comes an offence in this Nature to be light now, seeing it was heavy in the beginning? Oh let not the greatest Mercies of our God so fill us, as to make us slight or forget the least obedience, but rather let the continuance of his Mercy the more quicken you up unto a Zeal for his Name and Truth in all things, to be found doing and speaking according to the Rule of Righteousness, which ye learned in the Light, in the day of your being low and little, and then nothing will rise up and be exalted in the multitude of God's Mercies, but that holy Birth which lives in Purity when it is at highest;

est; and so that life of Righteousness will shine forth more and more, which glorifies God and seeks his honour. Dear Friends, that ye might be kept so unto the end, is the breathing and travel of my Soul: and that where this neglect hath entred, and this aforesaid Corruption either in Speech or Action is to be found, that ye would receive the Word of Exhortation in meekness and fear, in which it was written unto you, and may redeem the time, for the days are and shall be Evil, and none will hold the Mystery of the Faith (that saves from falling in the Evil day) but such as do keep the pure and undefiled Conscience, which none can do but by persisting and continuing in the daily Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief and obedience of the Truth.

A second Fruit that was brought forth from this good Root, was *Unity and Love* one towards another; which blessed be the Lord, is preciouslly preserved in and among many to this very day; who are so sensible of the divers operations of Truth in them, to be all by one Spirit, that they are still kept of one heart and mind, given up freely to serve the Lord in singleness of heart in their Generation; and are in this good work as Strengtheners and Encouragers of one another; but notwithstanding the Enemy hath been exceeding

ing busie to lay waste and destroy this blessed effect also, and that under divers Pretences, which the Lord still discovered by his own Light and Spirit in his People, who have singly waited upon him; but many have been his Wiles, sometimes fitting and preparing Vessels to rise up in the fleshly and sensual Wisdom, and to traduce and bring in corrupt and evil Doctrines, to try who were not sound in the Faith, that they may draw them aside into a heat and zeal for something which had not its Root in the Truth, and which they that abode in the Truth could not own, but judge and condemn in the Name of the Lord; which when such saw, they took thereat occasion of striving to propagate and promote that which they saw withstood; so having lost Subjection to the Spirit of Truth in themselves, which would have kept them in Unity in the Body; and having also lost and laid by their subjection to them that were over them in the Lord, they then grew stubborn and wilful, and proceeded in more zeal for that which stood in opposition to the Truth, than ever they did for the Truth it self; and these sometimes have prevailed to the subverting whole Households, and have turned several from the Faith and Simplicity that is in the Gospel, who, as well as those that subverted them, have lost the fellowship of the Saints,

Saints, and the savour of Life, either in themselves or others, and then the Enemy perswaded them, all are dead to the Life but themselves; and so they grow to have a tickling Joy in what they do and say, in obedience to that perverse and singular private Spirit, and so grow up to speak evil of Dignities, and are unruly, and dare to speak against Heaven, and them that dwell and inhabit in it, whom God makes to shine as Stars in the Firmament of his Power; but alas for them! my Soul pities them, when I see how they sport themselves with their own deceivings; but the day of the Lord is among his People, which hath and doth make them and their Spirit manifest, and their Fruits also have made them manifest.

Another Way that the Enemy seeks to break the Unity, and dissolve the Bond of Amity, is, by sowing a Seed of Jealousie and Prejudice in the Hearts of such in whom he can get an Entrance; that so they may cease from the true and unfeigned Love, and that upon a pretended Reason, because of this or that, which is supposed or imagined, in the evil parts in themselves, against others; giving heed to evil Thoughts or Surmises, which break forth many times in Whisperings and Tale-baring; which tho' the thing supposed to be evil, were really so; yet this is not to be
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allowed or given way to among you, but to use plainness one towards another, and single-heartedness; and to shut out the Evil One in this his subtil appearance also. Oh dear Friends! remember how the Lord hath dealt with you, and deal you so one by another; he hath not sought Occasions against you, but hath long born and suffered, and exercised much Patience and Tenderneſs towards you; yet plainly reproving the Evil in you, and not treasuring it up against you. Oh Friends! be like-mined one towards another, that the Enemy of your Peace and Concord may be defeated, and you preserved entire to one Head, even to Christ Jesus; and ye may be one, and the Name of the Lord may be one among you; and that which tends to the making cold your Love, may be judged in all; and so Brotherly Love will continue with you to the End.

Another way which the Enemy works to scatter, and to bring from this Unity, is, by leading some, who have believed, into some Sin and Iniquity, which the Body (that are in the Truth) are constrained to appear in Judgment against for the Truth's sake; and yet notwithstanding the Party so sinning, being above the witness in themselves, which would bring them to own the Judgment of the Spirit of Christ in his Church, they exalt them-

themselves above the Judgment, and seek to gain to them such whom they can enter by their words and Complaints, to take part with them against the Judgment, and those that passed it. Such were those whose words *did eat* (the Apostle said) *as a Canker*, of whom the Believers in those days were to be aware; for commonly such as have gone from the Power, that should have kept them clean and upright, they will also turn against the power in those that abide in it, especially if they be drawn forth to reprove and rebuke them: but let all such know, that's not the way to be renewed; and let all that take part with any that work Iniquity, know, that they do but defile their own Souls thereby, and do but rend themselves from that Body which they cannot prosper out of. And therefore, dear Friends, beware of joyning with that in your selves or in others, which the Power goeth against, let the Pretences be what they will; for that which doth Evil, will always be aptest to sow evil Complaining of others; and such as are in the unsatisfied Murmuring against Judgment passed upon them, are much to be feared; for they thereby render themselves to be the more guilty, and yet the further from Repentance. But, dear Friends, watch unto that which gives you a living feeling of the living Body,

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which is the Church, that in all things you may demean your selves as true Memberes of it, serving one another in Love, and submitting your selves one unto another for the Lord's sake : That in all plainness and Singleness, as becometh the Truth, you may seek to preserve the Unity which the Enemy of Truth and Peace doth envy ; so shall ye continue to strengthen one anothers hand in every good work, and this shall tend to the weakening of the hands of your Enemies, who seek to divide you, that they might rule over you. Many other Designs doth the wicked one try, daily to break and divide, more than can now be named or here inserted ; but they are all out of the Light, and if you be in it, you will see them, and that will preserve you ; for its one, and did make us one, and will keep us to be of one heart and mind to the end, if we abide in it.

3. The *third good effect* which Truth did work in the beginning in them who did truly receive it, was *Zeal and Faithfulness* to God in the bearing Testimony to what was manifest, tho' through great Sufferings ; in which, as Friends abide in the Root, they do daily increase in Power, to fulfil the same Testimony : for the mercy of the Lord doth engage them, and his answer of Peace in the midst of their Tryals, doth Arm them and encourage them, and

and they do hold out to the end; and for such the Lord hath always made a way, better than they could have made for themselves. Yet the Enemy hath in this matter also been very busie, and hath prevailed with some under divers Considerations, or rather Consultations, which he hath propounded unto them. But, O Friends, be ye all watchful, and take heed lest any of the testimonies of truth be laid wast; for that which leads to be weary of bearing Witness to the Truth, and to lay it Waste, the same will lay thee Waste, and bring thee into such a State, as thou wilt want the Truth to bear witness for thee; and tho' it be hard for Flesh and Blood (which hath no Kingdom but here) to fall into the hands of Unreasonable Men, yet it is a more fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God; and therefore, let all Lukewarm ones, who are neither hot nor cold, be now awakened, and all that have gone backwards be warned to *return to their First-Love, else the Lord will come against them, and the day hastens that will divide such their Portion among Hypocrites, except they Repent.*

But to touch at some of the Reasons or Arguments, which he that abode not in the Truth himself, useth to draw others into this kind of Treacherous Backsliding.

First, He appears to some to perswade them, That their former Testimony was born

more from an imitation of others, than from a work of the Power of God in themselves; and that now, they not finding the Thing required of them, they may leave off their Testimonies, or may do such things as they have denied formerly; this Snare doth the Enemy make use of in these days. But mark who it is that he hath caught with it; none but such who sometimes were Low in their minds, and dare not grieve the Spirit of God in themselves, nor others, but for the Truth's sake could give up all things rather than their Testimony; but in time growing careless and loose in waiting, lost that subject state, and grew high and exalted in their Minds above the Cross that should have crucified the betraying Wisdom; and so having lost the true exercise of the Power, and the feeling of the Excellency and Worth of the Truth, they knew not the Requirings of the Lord; and the earthly mind got up, that placed a greater esteem upon Earthly Things, than upon Things that are Eternal; and so things that once thou offeredest up to God, thou takest again into thine own hand, and so robbest the Lord, and growest careful about outward things, as other *Gentiles* are; and to cover thy shame therein, the Enemy then tempts thee to bely the Power that once wrote in thy Heart, and made thee afraid to Act
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against the Light, or to deny the *Testimony* for God in such things as was manifest, and then sayst, thou didst it by imitation; but thou shalt know thy Covering is too narrow in the day that hasteth upon thee.

Another Temptation that the Enemy presenteth, is, That tho' thou art convinced what to do, or what thou shouldst deny, yet the Tryals are so hard and so many, and Persecutors wax worse and worse, so that thou shalt not hold out to the end; and where he can get entrance with this Bait, he presently causeth an Evil Heart of unbelief and Doubting to arise, which takes away even the strength which the Lord did give, and so feebleness doth enter the Mind, and a Spirit of Bondage leads thee to fear again; and then comes the Dispute in thy Heart whether thou shalt stand with the Power of God, in the Obedience, or whether thou shalt fall under that Power that ariseth against God, and his Truth and People? and in this Combate thou hast a subtil Enemy, using many devices to betray thee, and a part in thy self, not yet mortified, that is ready to say, *Pity thy Self, Pity thy Wife, Pity thy Children, and Pity thy Relations*; which it may be sometimes, are all as so many Instruments of Satan to seduce thee, and lead thee into Darkness, that thou mayst not see so great necessity in thy bearing up thy

Testimony as indeed there is, nor so great a danger in the contrary as indeed there is.

Oh Friends ! at such a time as this, where is there any help but in the Lord? Where canst thou find a Saviour, but in that Light which gives to distinguish of the several Voices? Now it is good for thee to remember, that *if thou walkest after the Flesh, thou must and shalt surely Die and Wither.* In such a time flee, flee to the Lord, wait in his Dread to feel thy strength but renewed at the present and take no care for strength next *Month*, next *Year*, or next *Trial*, for *God is God, and changeth not, and will be the same to thee in Seven Trials as in Six, if thou believe and wait on him in uprightness*; and therefore fear not man, but trust in the Lord, all ye that have known and felt his Power, and let not in the Enemy of your Souls by the Door of *Carnal Reasoning*, but keep that shut; and rather consider, how the Enemy makes thee as a rejoicing among his own Children, and strengthens that hope in them of their overcoming all others, as well as thee; which hope is *Curst*, and shall be *Confounded*: And consider that if thou lettest fall thy Testimony, which thou hast once born for the Lord, thou makest the Heart of the Righteous sad, and makest their Travail through that Testimony the harder for them, by reason of thy en-

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couraging their Adversaries by the hope afore-
said. And whatever thou dost, *They must go
thorow to the End who will inherit the Crown of
Immortality.*

And again consider, It may be that thy back-
-sliding, or cowardly drawing away the Shoul-
der, may prove a Discouragement to others,
and they may stumble in thy stumbling, and
fall with thee, and never be able to rise, and
so thou bring their Blood also upon thee. Oh,
remember also that Servant of the Lord, who
could say, *Psal. 119. 157. My Persecutors are
encreased, but my Heart doth not decline thy Te-
stimonies.* That was a noble Spirit becoming
the Souldiers of Christ; yea, tho' persecuted by
Princes, as he saith, Verse 161.

Dear Friends, Let your Minds be stirred up
to be zealous for the Lord, in this the great
day of Controversie with Darknes and its
Power. Who hath God to bear Witness to
his Name, but you? Among whom hath he
made it known as among you? Who have
given up themselves to the Lord as you have
done? Well, *Blessed are they that keep Covenant
with the Lord, for they shall see his Glory.*

One more subtil Snare of the Enemy in this
matter is in my Heart to mention, that is this,
viz. To perswade thee for once, sometimes
to do that which the Light hath made mani-
fest, with a purpose afterwards to be more

Faithful. Oh Friends, In the Name and fear of the Lord, I exhort and warn you all to take heed of this, for this will prove but a false Confidence, thou wilt find this kind of going out of the Guidance of Truth, to be a dear Out-going to thee; for if ever thou dost return, it will be very hardly, and with bitter Anguish of Soul. Oh! do not tempt the Lord on this wise, *lest it do prove impossible upon thy sinning willingly to renew or restore thee again by Repentance*; thou wilt have thy Potage, but wilt lose the Blessing, tho' thou may seek it with thy Tears; for while thou wentest out, behold, thy way became hedged up, and the Thorny Nature got up in thee, and so thou art debarred and fenced out from enjoying thy former state; Sin being entred, Death soon follows. Oh remember *Sampson*, who when he had disclosed the Token of a *Nazarite*, in which state he stood in Covenant with God; yet thought to have shaken himself, and to have gone forth in his Strength, as at other times, but was mistaken, *Judg. 16. 20.* For the Lord was departed from him, tho' he knew it not. And so, tho' thou hast known the Lord's Presence and Power in thy Vessel, yet take heed of letting in that Treacherous Spirit, to lead thee to Unfaithfulness, and to betray the trust of his Trusts and Testimonies committed to thee, tho' it be but for once; for there-
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by thou wilt render thy self unworthy to be found a Witness of his Power another time ; for the Lord will leave that Vessel, and often doth, and chuseth other Vessels to manifest himself in, that will be more True and Faithful.

So, dear Friends, in true and Tender Love I have laid these things before you, that ye might all be stirred up and provoked to Love, and to good Works, that ye might abound in the Grace committed to you ; and none of you who have known the Truth, might be entangled with the Wiles of your subtil Enemy, and that you that have begun well, might not lose the things that ye have wrought, but might persevere in well-doing till ye have finished your Course in peace. And Friends, this is the Joy and delight of those that labour among you in the Lord, and hereby is our Hand strengthened, and our Hearts refreshed, when we do find ye such as we desire ye should be, even stedfast in the Truth ; and then also do you find us to you-ward, such as ye desire we should be, even a refreshing in the fellowship of Life unto you, and our God comforts us together, in the mutual joy and comfort of his holy Spirit, working in us and you.

And Friends, I am the more drawn forth at this time to visit you with an Epistle, because the Lord hath given me some sight of his great
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and dreadful Day, and Workings in it, which is at hand, and greatly hastens, of which I have something to say unto you, that ye may be prepared to stand in his Day, and may behold his wondrous Working among his Enemies, and have fellowship with his Power therein, and may not be dismayed nor driven away in the Tempest, which will be great.

And as concerning those succeeding Times, the Spirit of the Lord hath signified, that they will be Times of Horror and Amazement, to all that have, and yet do reject his Counsel: for as the days of his Forbearance, Warning and Inviting, hath been long, so shall his appearance amongst those that have withstood him, be Fierce and Terrible; even so terrible, as who shall abide his coming? for the Lord will work both secretly and openly, and his Arm shall be manifest to his Children in both.

Secretly he shall raise up a continual fretting anguish amongst his Enemies, one against another, so that being vexed and tormented inwardly, they shall seek to make each other miserable, and delight therein for a little season; and then the Prevailer must be prevailed over, and the digger of the Pit must fall therein; and the confidence that men have had one in another shall fail, and they will beguile and betray one another, both by
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counsel and strength; and as they have banded themselves to break you, whom God hath gathered, so shall they band themselves one against another, to break, to spoil, and destroy one another; and thorow the multitude of their Treacheries, all credit or belief, upon the account of their solemn engagement, shall fail; so that few men shall count themselves, or what is theirs, safe in the hand of his Friend, who hath not chosen his safety and friendship in the pure Light of the unchangeable Truth of God; and all the secret Counsels of the Ungodly shall be brought to nought, sometimes by the means of some of themselves, and sometimes by impossibilities lying in their way, which shall make their Hearts fail of ever accomplishing what they have determined; and in this state shall men fret themselves for a season, and shall not be able to see the Hand that turns against them, but shall turn to fight against one thing, and another, and a third thing, and shall stagger, and reel in Counsel and Judgment, as drunken men that know not where to find the way to Rest; and when they do yet stir themselves up against the holy People, and against the holy Covenant of Light, and them that walk in it, they shall but the more be confounded; for they shall be helped with a little help, which all the Un-

Ungodly shall not hinder them of, to wit, the secret Arm of the Lord, maintaining their Cause, and raising up a Witness in *Isa. 8.* the very Hearts of their Adversaries to plead their Innocency, and this shall make them yet the more to vex themselves, and to go thorow hard-bestead; for when they shall look upward to their Religion, to their Power, Policy, or Preferments, or Friendships, or whatsoever else they had trusted in, and relied upon, they shall have cause to curse it; and when they look downwards to the Effects produced by all those things, behold, then trouble, and horreur, and vexation takes hold on them, and drives them to Darknes; and having no help but what is Earthly, and being out of [the knowledge of the mighty overturning Power of the Lord God Almighty, they shall despair and wear out their days with Anguish; and besides all this, the terrible hand of the Lord is, and shall be openly manifested against this ungodly Generation, by bringing grievous and terrible Judgments and Plagues upon them, tumbling down all things in which their Pride and Glory stood, and overturning, overturning, even the Foundations of their strength; yea, the Lord will lay waste the Mountain of the Ungodly, and the strength of the fenced City shall fail, and when

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men shall say, *We will take Refuge in them,* Nahum 3. 12, 13: they shall become but a Snare, and there shall the Sword devour: And when they shall say, *We will go into the Field,* and put trust in the Number and Courage of our Soldiers, they shall both be taken away; and this Evil also will come of the Lord, and his hand will be stretched out still, and shall bring Confusion, Ruin upon Ruin, and War upon War; and the Hearts of men shall be stirred in them, and the Nations shall be as Waters, into which a Tempest, a swift Whirl-wind is entred, and even as Waves swell up to the dissolution one of another, and breaking one of another, so shall the swellings of People be: And because of the hardship and sorrow of those days, many shall seek and desire Death rather than Life.

Ah! my Heart relents and is moved within me in the sense of these things, and much more than I can write or declare, which the Lord will do in the Earth, and will also make haste to accomplish among the Sons of Men, that they may know and confess, *That the Most High doth Rule in the Kingdoms of Men, and pulleth down and setteth up according to his own Will: And this shall men do before seven times pass over them, and shall be content to give their Glory unto him that sits in Heaven.*

But, Oh Friends! while all these things are

are working, and bringing to pass, repose ye your selves in the Munition of that Rock that all these shakings shall not move, even in the knowledge and feeling of the eternal Power of God, keeping you subjectly given up to his Heavenly Will, and feel it daily to kill and mortifie that which remains in any of you, which is of this World; for the worldly part in any, is the changeable part, and that is up and down, full and empty, joyful and sorrowful, as things go well or ill in the World: For as the Truth is but one, and many are made partakers of its Spirit; so the world is but one, and many are partakers of the Spirit of it; and so many as do partake of it, so many will be straitned and perplexed with it; but they who are single to the Truth, waiting daily to feel the Life and Vertue of it in their Hearts, these shall rejoyce in the midst of Adversity; these shall not have their Hearts moved with fear, nor tossed with anguish because of evil Tydings, *Psal. 12. 7, 8.* Because that which fixeth them remains with them: These shall know their entrance with the Bridegroom, and so be kept from sorrow, tho his coming be with a noise; and when a midnight is come upon man's Glory, yet they being ready and prepared, it will be well with them, and having a true sense of the Power working in themselves, they cannot but have Unity and Fel-

Fellowship of it in the Earth, and will not at all murmur against what is, nor wish nor will what is not to be; these will be at rest till the Indignation passeth over, and these having no Design to carry on, nor no Party to promote in the Earth, cannot possibly be defeated nor disappointed in their undertakings.

And when you see Divisions, and Parties, and Rendings in the Bowels of Nations, and Rumours and Tempests in the Minds of People, then take heed of being moved to this Party or to that Party, or giving your strength to this or that, or counselling this way or that way; but stand single to the Truth of God, in which neither War, Rent nor Division is; and take heed of that part in any of you, which trusts and relies upon any sort of the Men of this World, in the Day of their Prosperity; for the same party will bring you to suffer with them in the time of their *adversity*, which will not be long after; for stability in that Ground there will be none; But when they shall say, *Come joyn with us in this or that*, remember you are joyned to the Lord by his pure Spirit, to walk with him in Peace and in Righteousness, and you feeling this, this gathers out of all Bussings, and Noises, and Parties, and Tumults, and leads you to exalt the Standard of Truth and Righteousness, in an innocent Conversation, to see

see who will flow unto that ; and this shall be a Refuge for many of the Weary, Tossed and Afflicted Ones in those days, and a Shelter for many whose Day is not yet over.

So dearly beloved Friends and Brethren, who have believed and known the blessed Appearance of the Truth, let not your Hearts be troubled at none of these things : Oh ! let not the things that are at present, nor things that are yet to come, move you from steadfastness, but rather double your Diligence, Zeal, and Faithfulness to the Cause of God : For they that know the Work wrought in themselves, they shall rest in the Day of
 Hab. 3. Trouble, Yea, though the Fig tree
 16, 17. fail, and the Vine brings not forth,
 and the Labour of the Olive tree
 ceaseth, and the Fields yield no Meat, and
 Sheep be cut off from the Fold, and there be
 no Bullocks in the Stall, yet then mayest thou re-
 joice in the Lord, and sing Praises to the God of
 thy Salvation.

And how near these days are to this poor Nation, few know, and therefore the Cry of the Lord is very loud unto its Inhabitants, through his Servants and Messengers, that they would prize their time while they have it, lest they be overturned, wasted and laid desolate before they are aware ; and before Destruction come upon them, and there be

no remedy, as it hath already done upon many.

Oh LONDON, LONDON! That thou and thy Rulers would have considered, and hearkened and heard, in the Day of thy Warnings and Invitations, and not have persisted in thy Rebellion, till the Lord was moved against thee, to cut off the Thousands and Multitudes from thy Streets, and the pressing throngings of People from thy Gates, and then to destroy and ruin thy *Streets* also, and lay desolate thy *Gates*, when thou thoughtest to have replenished them again.

And, Oh! saith my Soul, that thy Inhabitants would yet be warned, and perswaded to Repent and Turn to the Lord, by putting away every one the Evil that is in their Hearts, against the *Truth* in your selves, and against those that walk in it, before a greater Desolation and Destruction overtake you.

Oh! what shall I say to prevail with *London*, and with its Inhabitants! The Lord hath called aloud, he hath Roared out of *Zion* unto them, but many of them have not hearkned at all, nor considered at all.

Well, Oh my Friends! (and thou, oh my Soul!) return to your Rest, dwell in the Pavillion of the House of your God, and my God, and shelter your selves under the shadow of his Wings, where ye shall be Wit-

nesses of his Doings, and see his STRANGE ACT brought to pass, and shall not be hurt therewith, nor dismayed.

Oh my Friends! in the Bowels of dear and tender Love have I signified these things unto you, that ye might stand armed with the whole Armour of God, Cloathed in Righteousness, and your Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace, and freely given up in all things to the disposing of the Lord, who will deliver us, not by Might, nor by Sword, nor Spear, but by his own eternal invincible Arm, will he yet save us and deliver us, and get himself a Name by preserving of us: and we shall yet live to praise him who is worthy of Glory, of Honour and Renown, from the rising of the Sun to the setting of the same, now and forever, *Amen.*
Amen, saith my Soul.

A Postscript.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

I Have something farther in my Heart to communicate unto you, in dear and tender Love, and in desire of your preservation out of the Snare of your Adversary; And that is, To exhort you all to dwell in the
pure

pure Judgment of the Truth, which is a defence upon your Glory ; and let none bereave you of this under any pretence whatsoever ; but as you come to a true feeling of the Life in your selves, to which alone the certain Judgment appertaineth, so let this Life have freedom, and stop it not from judging all that which is at enmity with the Life, and tends to the hurting of the true Plant of God ; for I have seen a Harm hath come to many who have parted with their Judgment, and so have become unarmed, and the Enemy hath prevailed upon them, (under a pretended Tenderneſs) to permit or suffer ſuch things as were hurtful to themſelves and others ; and though the Lord hath given them Judgment and Diſcerning in the Matter, yet were bereaved of that Gift, and ſo by little and little became beguiled.

Oh dear Friends ! conſider theſe days are perilous times, and it is needful for every one to watch in that ſame Eternal Light to which you were firſt turned, that by its Righteous Judgment ye may be preſerved from every thing in your ſelves that appears contrary to that precious Life of which you have taſted : And when you have ſo done, then to take heed, that the Enemy do not do that by an Inſtrument which (through your watchfulneſs in the Light) he could not do without ;

and all beware of that affected Tenderness that cries out, *Be tender to all, and pray for all, and mind the Good in all, and love all, and judge none, but leave Judgment to God, &c.* I say, Heed not the plausible words of that Spirit, which being guilty, to save its own Head from a stroke, would bereave you of your Judgment, which God hath given you; and is indeed truly his Judgment, and is to be administred in his Wisdom and Power, for the cleansing and keeping clean his Sanctuary; for such as have no Judgment in their goings, are they that know not the true way of Peace, but make them crooked Paths, *He that goeth in them shall not know Peace, Isa. 59. 8.*

But some may say, *Was not Christ Meek and Lowly? and ought not all to be like unto him?*

'Tis true, my Friends; but there is a difference between the Seed's Suffering and its Reigning, and there are times for them both: and when it doth please God to permit the Hour and Power of Darkness in the open Persecutors, to exalt it self against his Seed and People, by Persecution, or such like; they are led by his Spirit to appear in Meekness and Quietness, as a Sheep before the Shearer. But what is this to suffering bad and perverse Spirits, that appear under pretence of the Truth, and yet are out of the Truth, and

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Enemies to its prosperity, striving to exalt and set up another thing instead of the Truth? Such as these the Lord doth not require you to use only Patience and Meekness towards; but if that will not reclaim them, they must know the Judgment of the Truth, and you in it must stand over them; for in this case the Day of the Exaltation of Christ is come, and God is crowning Truth with Dominion over every false Spirit, and corrupt Practice thereof.

And therefore, dear Friends, eye the Lord in his goings forth, and as you feel his Life in you to witness against any evil and corrupt thing or practice, use Plainness, and keep Sincerity, and turn not Judgment backwards; for that which is unwilling to be judged, and cries out, *Judge none, leave all to God, &c.* the same will take upon it both to judge and rule, but not in the Wisdom of God; and those that cry out so much for Tenderness, and against Truth's Judgment, the same are most dangerous to be drawn out from the patient suffering in the Spirit of Christ Jesus, when they ought to appear in the most Meekness, and to appear rough and wrathful in the striving and fighting Nature, and are most apt to be tempted into a Spirit of Revenge, as hath been seen by sad Experience; for they that lose the exercise of that by which all
should

should keep Dominion over Deceit, they lose that strength by which they should be enabled to suffer all things for the sake of *Christ Jesus*.

So, Dear Friends, in that which keeps out the Defiler and the Betrayer, all wait upon the Lord, that you may have your Armour on, and be fortified with the Strength, with the Might, and with the Judgments of God, and keep that under in every place which under Pretence of Tenderness and Forbearance would make void the Testimony of Truth, or make the offence of the Cross to cease in any thing wherein you have been instructed from the beginning, that the Lord may behold and see Judgment established, and be pleased, *Isa. 59. The Lord looked, and there was no Judgment, and it displeased him; for thereby Deceit got up, which with it is to be kept down.*

So the Lord God of Power and Wisdom preserve you faithful, and fitted for every good Word and Work; the Strong to watch over the Weak in singleness; and the Weak to be subject to the Strong in the Lord, that so the pure Plant of Righteousness and Truth may grow in and among you all, to his Praise that hath called you; To whom be Glory and Honour forever, Amen.